

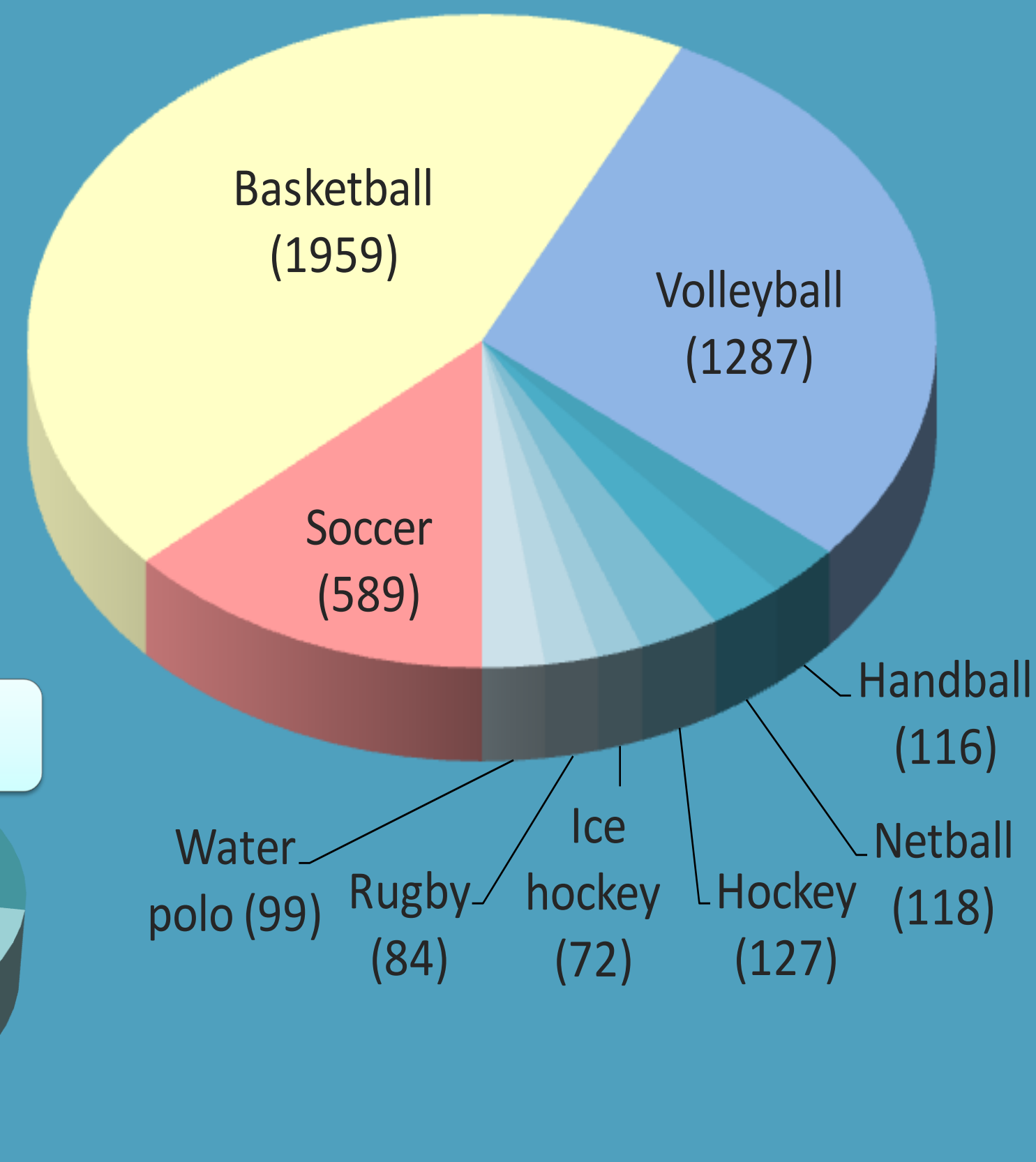
"Having great leadership is a big key to success. Our team will go as far as our leaders are willing to take us."  
Mike Candrea,  
Olympic softball coach

# Towards a new athlete leadership classification: Using Social Network Analysis to investigate the leadership role of the team captain

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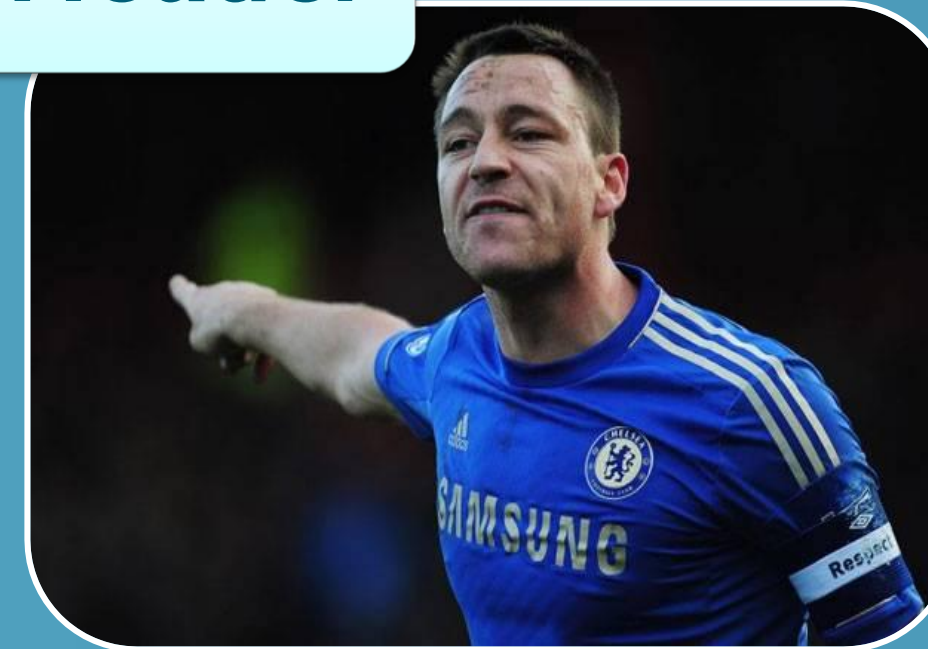
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4451 participants



## STUDY 1

Task leader



Motivational leader



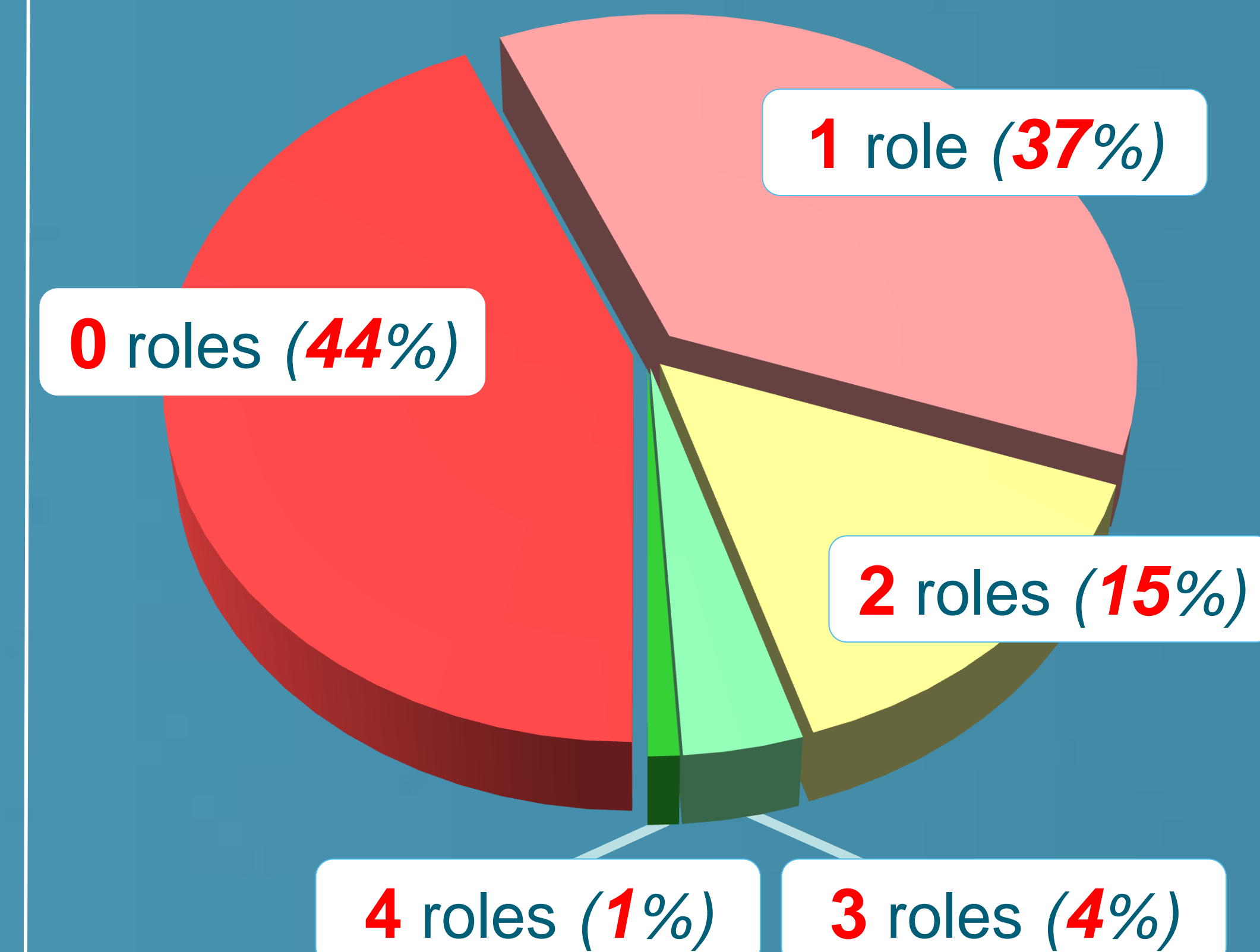
Social leader



External leader



# leadership roles provided by the team captain:



Very similar results regardless of...

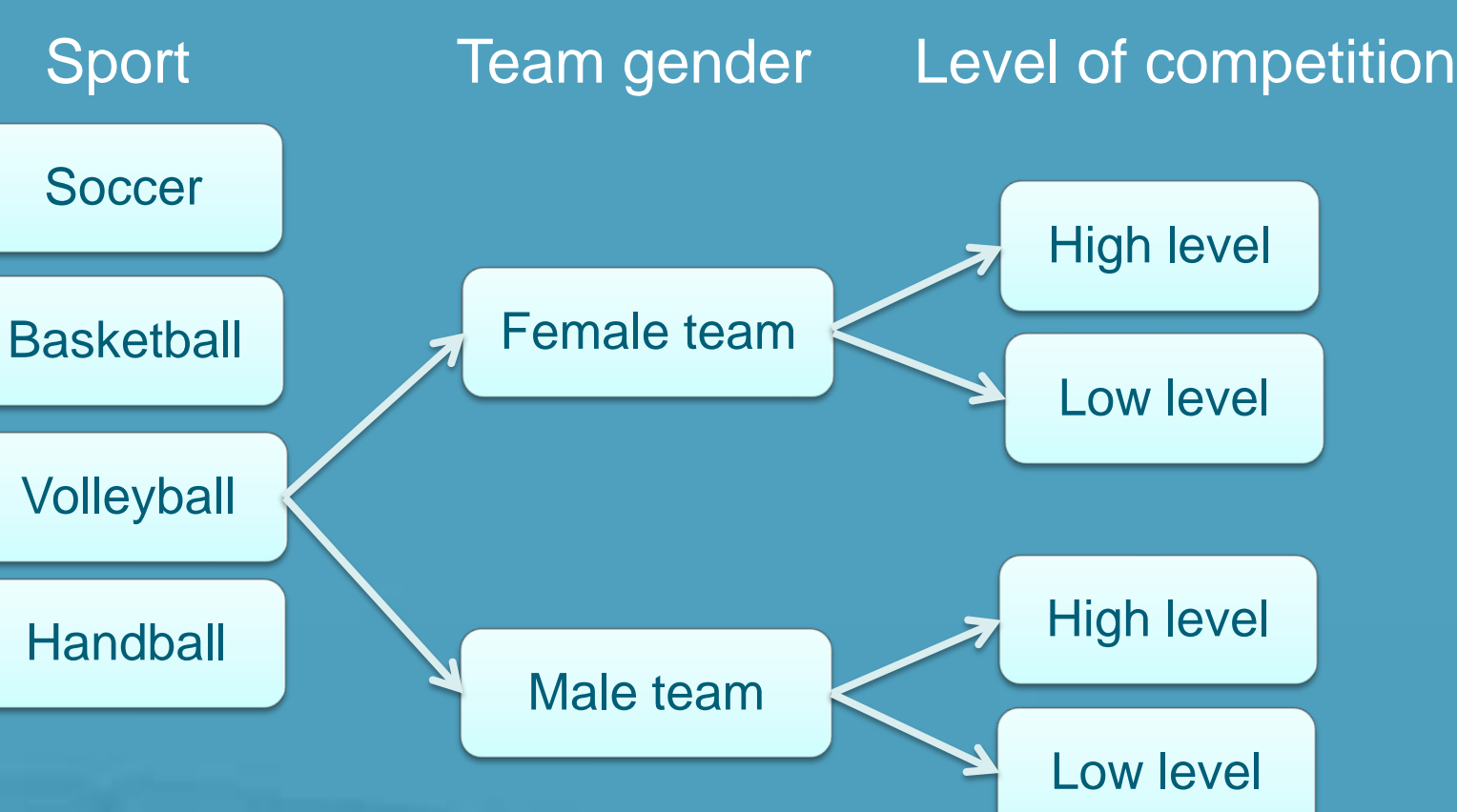
- ✓ Sport
- ✓ Male/Female teams
- ✓ Level
- ✓ Player/Coach

## STUDY 2

25 teams (N = 308)

## STUDY 3

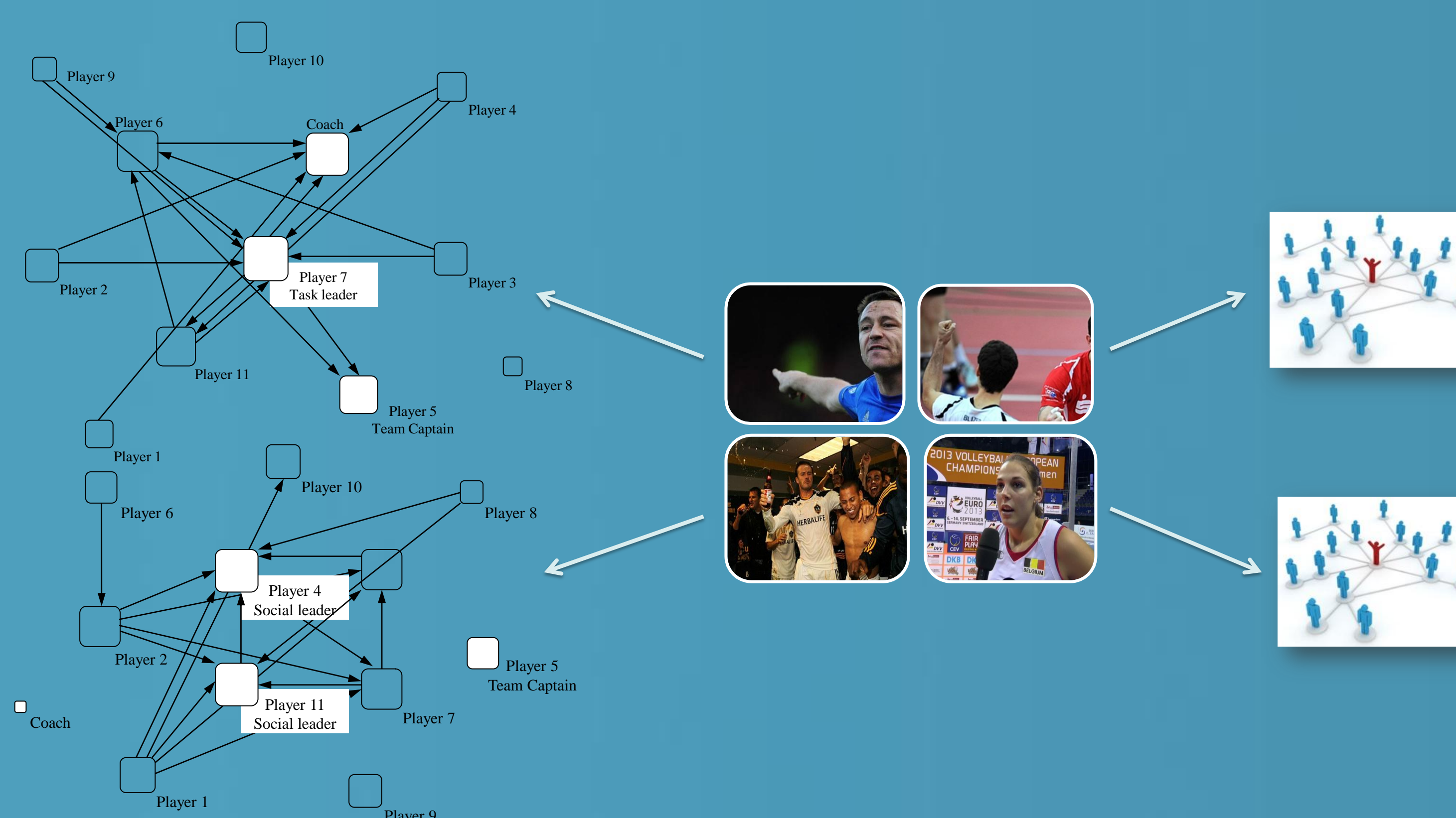
21 teams (N = 267)



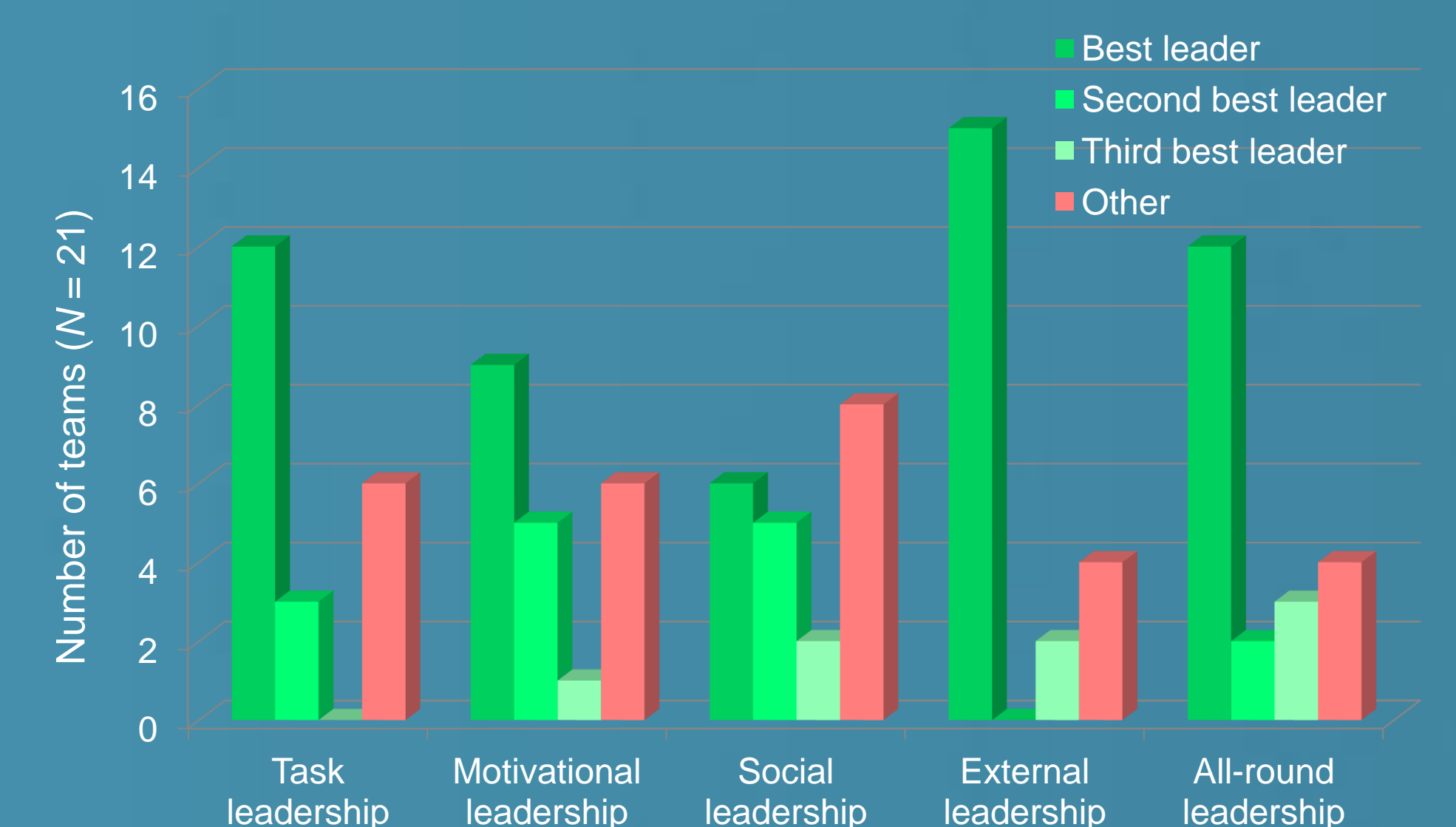
## STUDY 2: General leadership quality



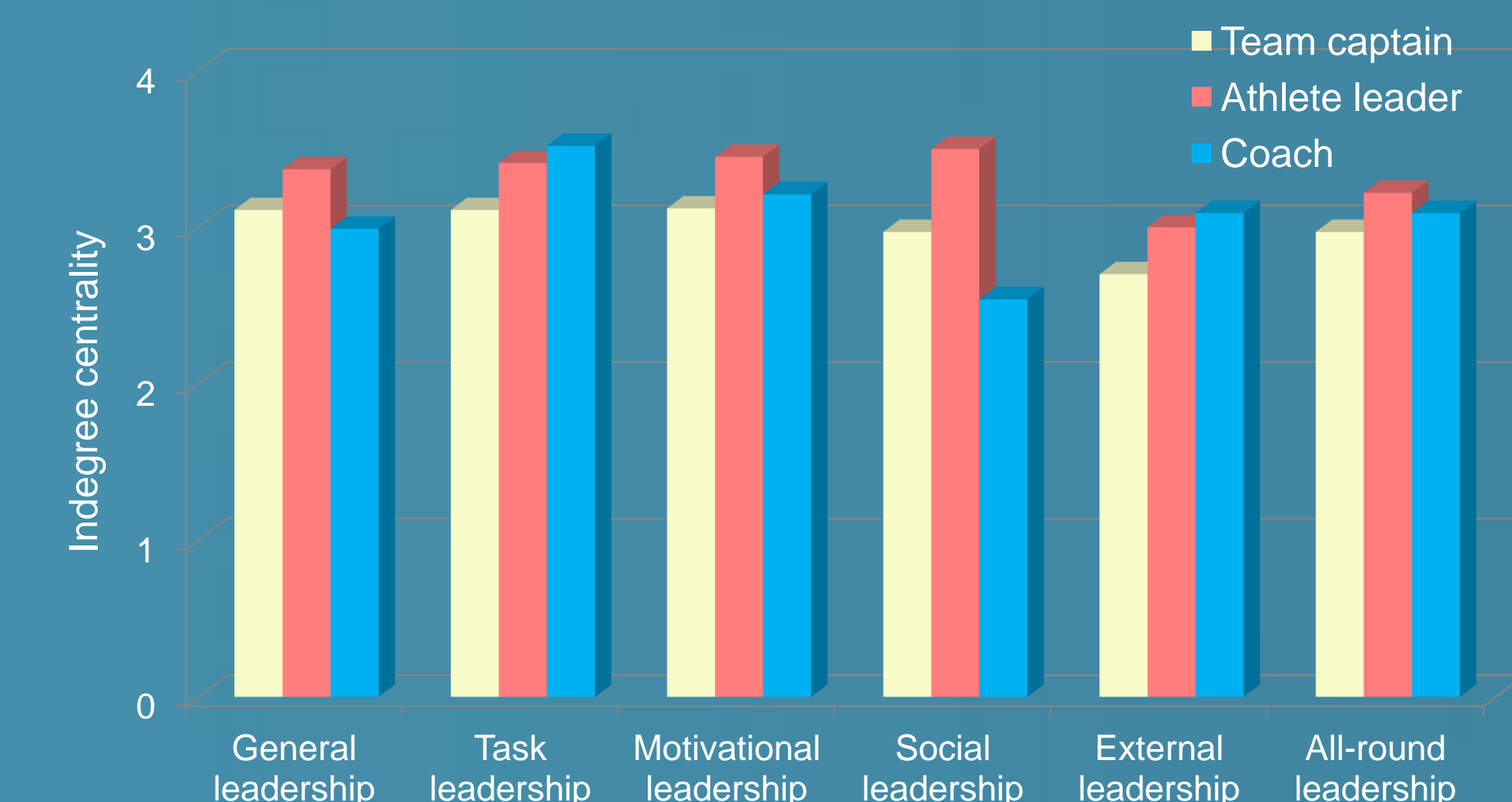
## STUDY 3: Role-specific leadership quality



Is the team captain the best leader in the team?



Who takes the lead in sport teams?



## Methods: Social Network Analysis

Please indicate for each of your teammates how well you perceive their general leadership qualities?

|                 | Very weak leader | Weak leader | Moderate leader | Strong leader | Very strong leader |
|-----------------|------------------|-------------|-----------------|---------------|--------------------|
| 1. Name player  | 0                | 1           | 2               | 3             | 4                  |
| 2. Name player  | 0                | 1           | 2               | 3             | 4                  |
| 3. Name player  | 0                | 1           | 2               | 3             | 4                  |
| 4. Name player  | 0                | 1           | 2               | 3             | 4                  |
| 5. Name player  | 0                | 1           | 2               | 3             | 4                  |
| 6. Name player  | 0                | 1           | 2               | 3             | 4                  |
| 7. Name player  | 0                | 1           | 2               | 3             | 4                  |
| 8. Name player  | 0                | 1           | 2               | 3             | 4                  |
| 9. Name player  | 0                | 1           | 2               | 3             | 4                  |
| 10. Name player | 0                | 1           | 2               | 3             | 4                  |
| 11. Name player | 0                | 1           | 2               | 3             | 4                  |
| 12. Name player | 0                | 1           | 2               | 3             | 4                  |
| 13. My coach    | 0                | 1           | 2               | 3             | 4                  |

## Conclusions

In many teams, the team captain is not perceived as the best leader. Other players within the team take the lead, both on and off the field.

Teams are characterized by shared leadership! The coach, the captain, and the informal leaders take the lead together.

These findings question the selection criteria used to assign the function of team captain.

Coaches should pay more attention to identify and improve the leadership qualities of their captain and other leaders in the team!

## Acknowledgements

This research was supported by a PhD Fellowship (Aspirant) of the Research Foundation Flanders (FWO).

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